

tion of certain formulas in Arabic, which very few if any of these people understand.¹

As to the great matter of their religion, on which I have taken infinite trouble to gain information, I can come to no satisfactory conclusion. I think that they have very little, and that what they have consists in a fusion of some of the tenets of Islam with a few relics of a nature worship, not less rude than that of the Ainos of Tezo and other aboriginal tribes.

They are Shiahhs, that is, they hate the Sunnis, and though the belief in Persia that they compel any one entering their country to swear eternal hatred to Omar is not absolutely correct, this hate is an essential part of their religion. They hold the unity of God, and that Mohammed was His prophet; but practically, though they are not Aji Ilahis, they place Ali on as high a pedestal as Mohammed. They are utterly lax in observing the precepts of the Koran, even prayer at the canonical hours is very rarely practised, and then chiefly by Seyyids and Hadjis. It has been said that the women are devout, but I think that this is a mistake. Many of them have said to me, "Women have no religion, for women won't live again."

Those of the Khans who can read, and who have made pilgrimages to Mecca, such as the Hadji Ilkhani, Khaja Taimur, and Mirab Khan, observe the times of prayer and read the Koran, and when they are so engaged they allow of no interruption, but these are remarkable exceptions.

Pilgrimages and visits to *imamzadas* are

lightly
undertaken, either for the accumulation of
merit, or to
wash away the few misdeeds which they
regard as sin, or
in the hope of gaining an advantage over an
enemy.
They regard certain stones, trees, hill-tops,
and springs
as " sacred," but it is difficult to define the
very vague

¹ See Appendix A.